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ABSTRACT

A PlayDay is a day designed to draw attention to a range of play activities, while providing an opportunity for children, families, members of the community, and teachers to share in physical and mental challenges without facing the pressure of winning or losing a game. PlayDays can range from massive park events for thousands of children and adults to small picnics for small children. Playleaders promote safety and creative, free-flowing games throughout the PlayDay. The types of games vary depending on the site and the composition of the group. The game schedule should alternate between active and passive games to give players and leaders a chance to rest. The equipment used should be as simple and inexpensive as possible, so that it can be easily replaced. This paper describes the American affiliate of the International Association for the Child's Right to Play (IPA/USA). Guidelines for planning, organizing, and implementing a PlayDay are provided. Considerations for particular games are covered. The final sections contain a worksheet for planning games and activities; a 10-item bibliography; a checklist, which lists all the committees that might be involved in a PlayDay; a blank quick-check form for the committees; and IPA/USA membership information. (AC)

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How To Plan, Organize, and Implement a PlayDay

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IPA/USA
The American Affiliate of the
International Association for the Child's Right To Play

May, 1992

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I. What is IPA/USA?

IPA/USA is the American affiliate of the International Association for the Child's Right to Play. The purpose of this organization is to protect, preserve, and promote play as a fundamental right for all humans. Membership is open to any individual, group or organization which endorses the United Nations' Declaration of the Right of the Child, especially Article 7, paragraph 3 which states:

> "The child shall have full opportunity for **play and recreation** which should be directed to the same purposes as education; society and the public authorities shall endeavor to promote the enjoyment of the right..."

IPA/USA holds a national conference every 3 years and sponsors several smaller workshops, seminars, and symposia annually. We publish a quarterly newsletter which features articles on play environments, safety, toys and materials, play leadership, and whole child development with play as the focus. IPA publishes an international journal quarterly called *PlayRights*. IPA hosts a World Conference every three years. The next World Conference will be in Melbourne, Australia, in February, 1993. The next National IPA/USA Conference will be in Denton, TX in September, 1992 with the theme "Play: A Daily Minimum Requirement."

If you believe that:

+Play, along with the basic needs of nutrition, health, shelter, and education, is vital for the development of the potential of all children,
+Family participation needs to be strengthened by support systems such a play leadership,
+Environments and programs to meet children's real needs should be created,

If you are concerned that:

+Society is indifferent to the importance of play,
+Schools are indifferent to the importance of play,
+Children are increasingly living with inadequate provision for survival and development
+Children are increasingly living in inappropriate housing settings with less spaces to play
+Children are neglected in environmental planning,
+Cultural traditions are deteriorating and that children are increasing exploited commercially,
+Children are constantly exposed to War, violence, and destruction, and
+"Winning at all costs" dominates children's sports and play,

Then please consider becoming a member of IPA/USA and become part of an international, interdisciplinary organization that supports and works for the Child's Right To Play. (Membership information can be found in section VIII.)

II. What is a PlayDay?

A PlayDay is fun! It is a day designed to draw attention to a range and diversity of play activities. A PlayDay will encompass everything from massive park events for thousands of children and adults to small picnics for little ones. It is an opportunity for children, schools, day cares, individuals, families, or communities to share in physical and mental challenges without the pressure of winning or losing "the game." The point of a PlayDay is to play for the sake of playing, to challenge each individual, and to share in the joy of discovery and interaction.

Adults and many children have had the simple pleasures of play taken away by competitive and team sports. A PlayDay will offer a chance to go back to the times when one played just to play. A PlayDay provides opportunities to exercise the mind as well as the body. The games and activities challenge one to use their imagination to come up with new ways to play each game. Even though some games and activities have rules, the rules are made to be altered for the benefit of each game and group that is playing. A PlayDay will offer games and activities for toddlers to grandparents, and all ages in between. Some games can be played by all ages, while others should only be played by specific age groups. Play is the important element on the PlayDay. It requires little more than an imagination, and can continue until everyone is too tired too move. Every play event is successful in its own way.

PlayDays can take on many dimensions and shapes and are determined by the other events which may be planned. If the day is planned totally around the PlayDay a schedule can be planned and followed. Different size groups can be more easily kept together. But if the PlayDay is part of a larger event such as a Kidsfest, Art Fair, Octoberfest, Springfest, or other community event, the games and activities will vary with the flow of the crowd and the specific mix of people. It is important to keep this in mind when planning the games and activities and the number of playleaders, volunteers, or referees that you will need.

III. Who Is Involved?

Kids, Adults, Parents
Schools, Childcares, Teachers
PTA's (National or Local)
Public Officials
Corporations, Businesses
Media, Newspapers, magazines, TV, Radio
Scouts, Community organizations
Universities, Colleges, Students, Faculty,
Cities, Regions, Localities
Recreation Centers
Design Agencies
City Planners
Designers

How Are They Involved? Other Supporting Events/Activities

Games/Tournaments
Play Leadership Workshops
Playground/Schoolyard Safety Evaluation Event
Playground Building Seminars/Workshops
Awards for Excellence in Play or Design, etc.
Articles in Newspapers, Reports of TV/Radio
Initiation/Completion of Play Projects
Conference about Play
Presidential, Mayoral, Gubernatorial Proclamation, Declarations, etc.
Contests, e.g., Ball Bouncing, Hula Hoops, other benefits
Bumper Stickers
Hunger Strike for Play

IV. General Considerations

1 SITE

1.1 The site can be inside as well as outside.

1.2 The site will determine the appropriateness of certain games due to the surface material. The games played on grass can be much more physical and challenging than games played on asphalt or on a gymnasium floor. At the same time, games played indoors can be oriented toward bouncing and skill activities. It is important that the games are appropriate for the flooring surface(s) available.

1.3 An outdoor site should have protection from the sun and in case of inclement weather, the elements.

1.4 If at all possible, an indoor site should have some soft surface for little people or to accommodate physical games played by others.

2. AGE GROUPS

2.1 It is best to play games with age groups divided into Little People, Middle People, and Big People. Little People are toddlers up to 5 or 6. Middle People are from 6 to 12 or so. Big people are 13 to adult. The divisions are more for motor and physical development than anything else. It is very easy for a teenage boy or girl to run down a five year old!

2.2 Of course the size divisions are also for different types of play. Toddlers are more interested in solo play and one on one play, whereas teens and adults like active team type games.

3. PLAYLEADERS

3.1 Playleaders are one of the most important parts of a PlayDay. They can be teachers, administrators, child care workers, parents, or community volunteers. They are there to promote safety and creative, free flowing games throughout the day. The Playleader can make the most mundane games and activities more of a challenge and a lot more fun by watching the play and inserting his or her imagination into the game!

3.2 The Playleaders will make sure that the play does not get out of hand. Most of the time the players will self-referee, but occasionally a game will need a ruling. Since most of the games don't have winners or losers the ruling can have a twist or the Playleader can allow the teams to decide by a vote or the play can just be started over!

3.3 The Playleaders also make sure that overly physical players check their play and don't overdo it. Older children and many adults don't know when they are playing beyond the ability of the rest of the players. A subtle hint by the Playleader can make the game more fun for the other players and insure that nobody gets hurt.

3.4 Once in a while a player will not cooperate or plays to hurt someone. Unfortunately the only choices for the Playleader is to warn the player and then ask that player to stop playing until the next game. This choice is not fun for anyone, but safety and the enjoyment of the rest of the players is much more important.

3.5 Anyone can be a Playleader! If possible, tee shirts can be provided for new Playleaders or the new Playleader can just start in. Refereeing at a PlayDay is more about playing really than officiating anyway.

3.6 A good Playleader will watch the games more for the way the game is being played than to judge the fairness of the play. If the Playleader sees that the play is taking a new direction or an idea just pops into his or her mind, then the Playleader should change the rules. The Playleader can suggest to the players that they might want to change the game as well.

3.7 Playleaders also can add a new game or change the current game to alleviate lulls in the play due to the abilities and attitudes of the players.

4 GAMES*

4.1 The type of games played must be determined for each play site and play group; indoor games will differ from outdoor games, hard surface games differ from soft surface games, little people games differ from big people games.

4.2 If it is impossible to determine the site characteristics or the specific age groups then the games types will have to be planned for all variables. If a game that is planned turns out to be inappropriate for the site or group, don't play it! It is better to eliminate a game than to have an injured player. If the players don't get the hang of a game or don't seem to like the rules, change the rules or play another game. The nice thing about a PlayDay is that it doesn't have a formula.

4.3 When organizing the game schedule plan to alternate between active and passive games. This will allow both players and Playleaders a chance to rest. Also, if the PlayDay is combined with another event a changing and fresh mix of players will result. The alternating games will give the Playleaders a much needed break.

4.4 Some games are much more popular and attract large crowds of players than others. It is sometimes necessary to end a game to disperse the crowd and to insure safety. If there are too many players in an active game for the Playleaders to control it is always better to change the game or alter the rules than to keep from having an injury.

4.5 Some games;

LITTLE PEOPLE	*MIDDLE PEOPLE*	*BIG PEOPLE*
fris-box		
ball-box		
dragon's tail	dragon's tail	
parachute games	parachute games	
hunker hawser	hunker hawser	hunker hawser
bola	bola	bola
tug of war	tug of war	tug of war
balloon toss	balloon toss	balloon toss
ball crawl	ball crawl	ball crawl
	planet pass	planet pass
	snoball tag	snoball tag
	the blob	the blob
	british bull dog	british bull dog
	schmerlitz	schmerlitz
lap game	lap game	lap game
clean up game	clean up game	clean up game

*Although PlayDays can include many activities; e.g., adventure play activities, face painting, arts and crafts, other sport events, food, etc.; the focus of this document and presentation is on noncompetitive games.

5 EQUIPMENT

5.1 The equipment for a PlayDay should be as simple and inexpensive as possible. The message to players is that it is not necessary to purchase specific and costly equipment to play. An imaginative mind is the most valuable piece of equipment on the field.

5.2 The equipment should be easily replaceable in the event of breakage, or loss. It should be recycled from other uses if possible. This demonstrates how easy it is to play.

5.3 Some equipment that can be used:

GAME	EQUIPMENT	NOTES
fris-box	frisbees, boxes	
ball-box	playballs, boxes	
dragon's tail	tails	
parachute games	parachutes, playballs, earthball	
hunker hawser	long rope, small tires	
bola	ropes w/balls	
tug of war	long ropes	
balloon toss	water balloons, hose, nozzles	
ball crawl	earthball	
planet pass	earthball	
snoball tag	playballs	
the blob	people	
british bull dog	people	
schmerlitz	balls in socks	
lap game	laps	
general	markers, name tags, duct tape, mat knife,foamcore,cardboard,sunscreen, first aid kit, water cooler, hand cart,	

V. Workpage for Games and Activities

GAME/ACT.	EQUIPMENT	NOTES

VI. Resources/Bibliography

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Nelson, E. (1985). *Singing and dancing games for the very young.* New York, NY: Sterling Publishing Co., Inc.

Orlick, T. (1978). *The cooperative sports and games book.* New York, NY: Pantheon Books.

Rockwell, R., E. Sherwood and R. Williams. (1983). *Hug a tree and other things to do outdoors with young children.* Mt. Rainer, MD: Gryphon House, Inc.

Rogers, F. and B. Head. (1975). *Mister Rogers' playbook: Insights and activities for parents and children.* New York, NY: Berkley Publishing Corporation.

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VII. PlayDay Quick Check

The following forms are provided to enable the designers of the PlayDay to "Quick Check" all the important tasks. The first form was developed to organize and appoint all the possible committees that might be involved in a PlayDay. There will be a PlayDay Chairperson and possibly a Co-Chairperson. There will be several committees involved. See Quick Check for suggestions. Blanks are provided for other possible committees.

The second form is to be used by each individual committee. There are blanks provided for the Chair's name and all the members. Specific tasks will then be developed for each committee.

IPA USA American Association for the Child's Right to Play

PlayDay Quick Check

Site _____ Theme _____

Date _____ Anticipated Registration _____

TASKS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	TARGET DATE	DATE COMPLETED	NOTES
Select PlayDay Chairperson _____ Co-Chairperson _____				
Appoint Committees (Suggestions follow)				
Site/Date/Theme				
Activities/Special Events				
Play Leaders/Volunteers/Staff				
Refreshments				
Fund-raising				
Publicity				
Celebrities/Special Invited Guests				
Equipment/Materials/Props				
Awards/Certificates				

TASKS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	TARGET DATE	DATE COMPLETED	NOTES
First Aid Station				
Information Booth/Lost & Found				
Parking Facilities				
Liability Insurance (Parental & Adult Release Forms)				
Security (Site/Building/Equipment)				
Evaluations				
Clean-Up				

IPA
USA American Association for the Child's Right to Play

PlayDay

Quick ☑ Check

Quick Check for Committees

Site _____ **Theme** _____

Date _____ **Anticipated Registration** _____

Committee _____ **Members** _____

Chairman _____ _____

Co-Chairman _____ _____

TASKS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	TARGET DATE	DATE COMPLETED	NOTES

VIII. IPA/USA Membership Information

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

I am/We are in agreement with the aims and objectives of IPA and wish to apply for membership in the following category:

INDIVIDUAL

- ☐ Student/Playworker $20.00
- ☐ All Other Individuals $40.00

GROUPS

- ☐ Local Groups, Agencies, and Organizations $50.00
- ☐ National Voluntary Groups $65.00
- ☐ Government Departments at all Levels $80.00

BENEFACTORS

- ☐ All Benefactors $125.00

RECIPROCAL

- ☐ International Organizations No Fee

Mr./Mrs./Ms. Name

Occupation

If group member, name of person to receive correspondance

Address

City State Zip

Country

Date of Application Signature

Area of special interest

Your check for the appropriate fee above should be made out to IPA/USA and mailed with the application form to:

Sunny Davidson
1702 Downhill Dr.
Wichita Falls, TX 76302